Summary

For more than a century, a large railroad yard has existed in an area bounded by John Kronk, Livernois, and Dix extending west to about Miller Street. This yard is just a short distance west of the junction of mainline railroad tracks running east-west and those running roughly north-south (Figure S-1).

A significant volume of freight being moved by railroads today is being delivered to the rails by trucks. Following the train trip, it is again moved by truck to its final destination. These movements between rail and truck are termed intermodal freight transportation. The most common movements involve transferring containers or trailers between railroad flatcars and trucks. This activity usually takes place at a location called a terminal. An example is shown on Figure S-2.

The Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Project consists of the development of a complex of terminals operated by several railroads, which will provide efficient intermodal service to business and industry. Presently, there are two intermodal terminals in close proximity in Southwest Detroit: Detroit-Livernois Yard (operated by CSX and Norfolk Southern) and the newly-created yard behind the Michigan Central Depot just north of Bagley (operated by Canadian Pacific Railway). There is another smaller area that may be used for intermodal freight just south of Clark Street adjacent to the old Cadillac plant. These three form the nucleus of what is referred to as the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal, the DIFT. There are six other intermodal freight terminals in the Detroit and Southeast Michigan area.

It is the charge of this study to evaluate the impacts of alternative scenarios for the intermodal freight terminal and the movement of trucks into and out of the terminal. It is important that the movement of the freight that drives jobs and economic growth be facilitated. It is also important that the movement of these trucks respect the quality of life of the residents of Southwest Detroit, Dearborn, Melvindale and Allen Park. The current DIFT Study is designed to address these issues.

For the remainder of 2001, MDOT and its consultants will analyze alternatives for terminal development and their associated truck movements, evaluating their impacts, and making recommendations to protect the neighborhoods as much as possible. This can only be done well if the neighbors are involved.

Project Purpose

The purpose of the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Project is to support the economic competitiveness of southeastern Michigan by improving freight transportation opportunities and efficiencies for business and industry. The goal is to develop a regional intermodal facility with sufficient capacity to provide for existing and future intermodal demand. The anticipated public benefits of developing the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal complex include the following:

- Potential for economic redevelopment of portions of Detroit, Dearborn and vicinity, as well as the region, with the associated increase in employment and tax base, including:
  - More construction, manufacturing and transportation jobs.
  - Lower costs to GDA consumers of products from televisions to automobiles.
- Reduced truck “vehicle miles traveled” on Michigan highways. Reducing truck “VMT” saves lives, reduces pollution, and conserves highway capacity.
- Provision of necessary infrastructure to support current and future distribution needs of the auto manufacturers, the state’s largest industry.
- Existence of the opportunity for MDOT to focus highway investments at a single World-Class freight transportation hub around which further industrial development can occur.

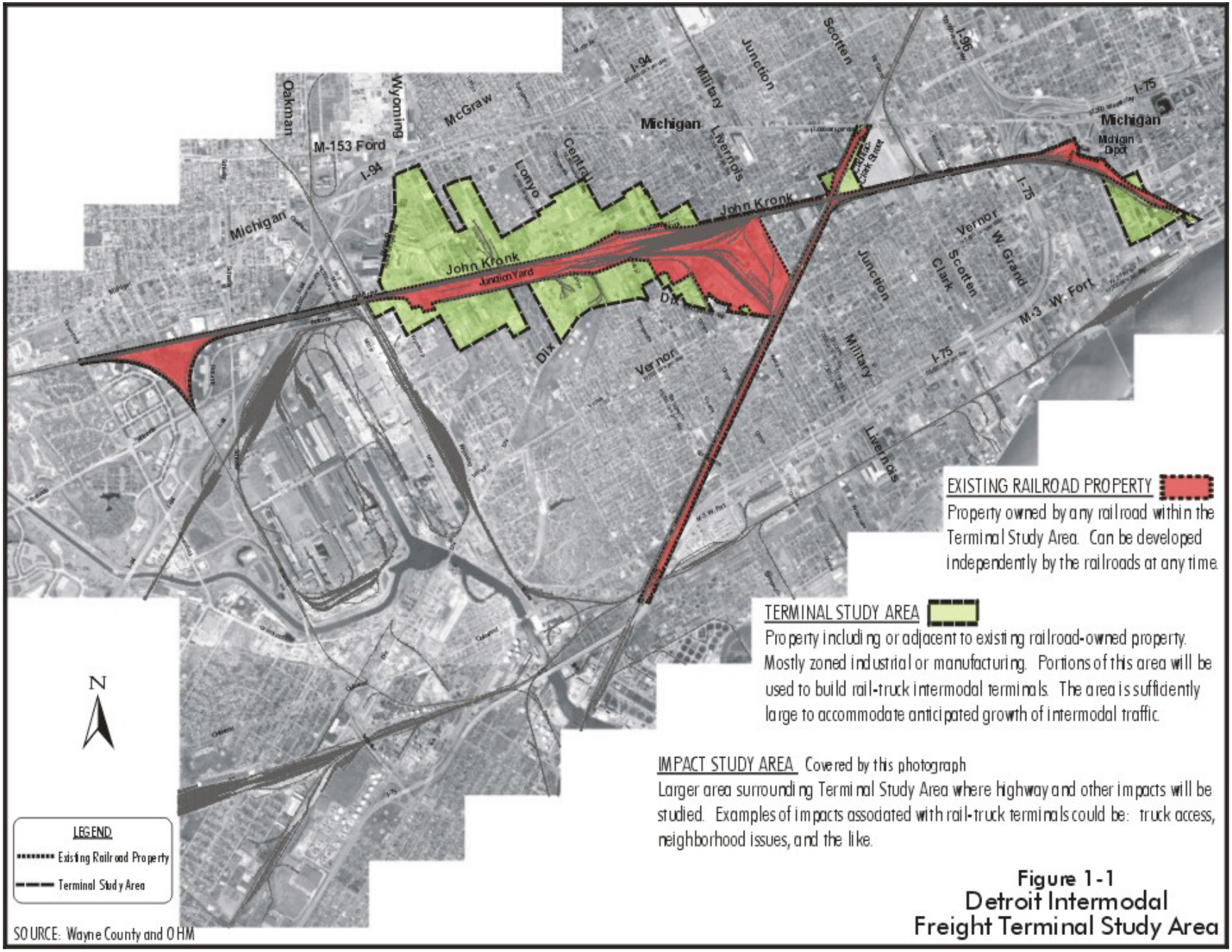

Figure 1-1
Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Study Area

Figure 1-2
Intermodal Terminal Example
Toronto, Ontario

SOURCE: Canadian Pacific Railway